

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
WESTERN DIVISION

JAMES HILL, :
 :
Plaintiff, : Case No. 3:07cv201
 :
vs. : JUDGE WALTER HERBERT RICE
 :
COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY, :
 :
Defendant. :

DECISION AND ENTRY ADOPTING IN PART AND REJECTING IN PART
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE
JUDGE (DOC. #11); PLAINTIFF'S OBJECTIONS IN PART TO SAID
JUDICIAL FILING (DOC. #12) SUSTAINED; JUDGMENT TO ENTER IN
FAVOR OF PLAINTIFF AND AGAINST DEFENDANT COMMISSIONER,
REVERSING COMMISSIONER'S DECISION THAT PLAINTIFF WAS NOT
DISABLED, AND, THEREFORE, NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFITS UNDER THE
SOCIAL SECURITY ACT AND REMANDING CAPTIONED CAUSE TO
DEFENDANT COMMISSIONER FOR PAYMENT OF BENEFITS
CONSISTENT WITH THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT; TERMINATION ENTRY

Plaintiff has brought this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) to review a decision of the Defendant Commissioner denying Plaintiff's application for Social Security disability benefits. On August 12, 2008, the United States Magistrate Judge filed a Report and Recommendations (Doc. #11), recommending that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act be vacated; that no finding be made as to

whether Plaintiff was under a "disability" within the meaning of the Social Security Act; and remanding the captioned cause to the Defendant Commissioner and the Administrative Law Judge, pursuant to Sentence Four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), for further consideration consistent with her Report. Based upon reasoning and citations of authority set forth in the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendations (Doc. #11), as well as upon a thorough de novo review of this Court's file, including the Administrative Transcript (filed with Defendant's Answer at Doc. #7), and a thorough review of the applicable law, this Court adopts in part and rejects in part the aforesaid Report and Recommendations and, in so doing, orders the entry of judgment in favor of the Plaintiff and against the Defendant Commissioner, concluding that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act was not supported by substantial evidence, and remanding the captioned cause to the Defendant Commissioner for the payment of benefits consistent with the Social Security Act. The Plaintiff's Objections in part to said judicial filing (Doc. #12) are sustained. Accordingly, the decision of the Defendant Commissioner is reversed.

In reviewing the Commissioner's decision, the Magistrate's task is to determine if that decision is supported by "substantial evidence." 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C), this Court, upon objections being made to the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendations, is required to make a de novo review of those recommendations of the report to which objection is made.

This de novo review, in turn, requires this Court to re-examine all the relevant evidence, previously reviewed by the Magistrate, to determine whether the findings of the Secretary [now Commissioner] are supported by "substantial evidence."

Lashley v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 708 F.2d 1048, 1053 (6th Cir. 1983); Gibson v. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, 678 F.2d 653, 654 (6th Cir. 1982). This Court's sole function is to determine whether the record as a whole contains substantial evidence to support the Commissioner's decision. The Commissioner's findings must be affirmed if they are supported by "such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971), citing Consolidated Edison Company v. NLRB, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938); Landsaw v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 803 F.2d 211, 213 (6th Cir. 1986). Substantial evidence means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion. Richardson, *supra*, at 401; Ellis v. Schweicker, 739 F.2d 245, 248 (6th Cir. 1984). Substantial evidence is more than a mere scintilla, but only so much as would be required to prevent a directed verdict (now judgment as a matter of law) against the Commissioner if this case were being tried to a jury. Foster v. Bowen, 853 F.2d 483, 486 (6th Cir. 1988); NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, 306 U.S. 292, 300 (1939). To be substantial, the evidence "must do more than create a suspicion of the existence of the fact to be established... [I]t must be enough to justify, if the trial were to a jury, a refusal to direct a verdict

when the conclusion sought to be drawn from it is one of fact for the jury.”

LeMaster v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 802 F.2d 839, 840 (6th Cir. 1986), quoting NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, *supra*.

In determining whether the Commissioner’s findings are supported by substantial evidence, the Court must consider the record as a whole. Hephner v. Mathews, 574 F.2d 359 (6th Cir. 1978); Ellis, *supra*; Kirk v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 667 F.2d 524, 536 (6th Cir. 1981); Houston v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 736 F.2d 365 (6th Cir. 1984); Garner v. Heckler, 745 F.2d 383 (6th Cir. 1984). However, the Court may not try the case *de novo*, resolve conflicts in evidence or decide questions of credibility. Garner, *supra*. The findings of the Commissioner of Social Security and proceedings on Claimant’s application for social security disability benefits are not subject to reversal merely because there exists in the record substantial evidence to support a different conclusion. Buxton v. Halter, Commissioner of Social Security, 246 F.3d 762 (6th Cir. 2001). If the Commissioner’s decision is supported by substantial evidence, it must be affirmed, even if the Court as a trier of fact would have arrived at a different conclusion. Elkins v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 658 F.2d 437, 439 (6th Cir. 1981).

In addition to the foregoing, in ruling as aforesaid, this Court makes the following, non-exclusive, observations:

1. While this Court agrees with the Magistrate Judge that the Administrative Law Judge made an error of law in his evaluation of the medical sources of record, this Court concludes that this, in fact, is a situation in which the proof of disability is strong and evidence to the contrary is lacking. Indeed, it is clear that all essential factual issues have been resolved and that the record adequately establishes this Plaintiff's entitlement to benefits. Accordingly, a remand for the payment of benefits, rather than one for further administrative proceedings, is warranted. Faucher v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 17 F.3d 171, 176 (6th Cir. 1994).

WHEREFORE, based upon the aforesaid, this Court adopts in part and rejects in part the Report and Recommendations of the United States Magistrate Judge (Doc. #11), having concluded that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act was based not only upon a procedural error but, in addition, was not supported by substantial evidence. Plaintiff's Objections in part to said judicial filing (Doc. #12) are sustained. Judgment will be ordered entered in favor of the Plaintiff and against the Defendant Commissioner, reversing the decision of the Defendant Commissioner that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the

Social Security Act, and remanding the captioned cause to the Defendant
Commissioner for the payment of benefits consistent with the Social Security Act.

The captioned cause is hereby ordered terminated upon the docket records of
the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division,
at Dayton.

September 29, 2008

/s/ Walter Herbert Rice
WALTER HERBERT RICE, JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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